



Neurology Care Line

PADRECC Pathways

Houston Parkinson's Disease Research, Education and Clinical Center
Vol 4, No. 1, Spring 2005

Director's Corner

In recognition of Parkinson's Disease Awareness Month, the PADRECC and Houston Area Parkinson Society (HAPS) will sponsor a Wellness Education Fair for individuals with Parkinson's disease (PD) and their families on Saturday, April 30, from 9 am to 1 pm. The Society for Progressive Supranuclear Palsy, Texas Woman's University School of Physical Therapy, Houston, and The University of Texas Medical Branch Department of Physical Therapy, Galveston, will co-sponsor the event.

This is a good opportunity for you to find out how allied health professionals can help you maintain a healthy lifestyle, deal with PD symptoms, and manage preventable problems. Our PADRECC team, the HAPS team, MEDVAMC personnel, and community health care professionals knowledgeable about PD and related movement disorders have volunteered their time and expertise. The various health care specialists will have tables and booths with displays and take-home information. We have planned small group educational sessions on nutrition, safety, and

exercise. PADRECC neurologists will be on hand to answer questions and talk with veterans and members of the community with PD, their family members, caregivers, and friends.

The following educational activities will be available and you will have the opportunity to ask questions:

Physical Therapy (PT) – Health and wellness screenings, balance screening, small group exercise education class, and “ask the PT.”

Occupational Therapy (OT) – Hand strength testing, demonstration of equipment and adaptive aides, information on dealing with fatigue and practical problems, and “ask the OT.”

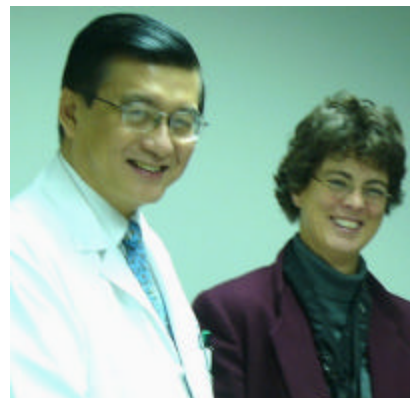
Speech-language Pathology (SP) – View a film on the Lee Silverman Voice Treatment Technique for PD patients, obtain information on management of speech and swallowing problems, and “ask the SP.”

Nursing – Blood pressure screening, small group sessions on diet, nutrition, and safety, and the opportunity to ask the nurses questions about constipation, when and how to take PD medications, and what to do in an emergency.

Neurology – PADRECC neurologists will answer patient/family questions in small group sessions and at the neurology booth.

The PD Fair will be held at the American Red Cross Building at Kirby Drive and Highway 59 from 9 am to 1 pm. Parking is free and close to the building. It is a “come” and “go” event, and we will serve light refreshments. Mark your calendar for Saturday, April 30. We will be mailing you a brochure with detailed information. I'll look forward to seeing you there.

*Eugene C. Lai, MD, PhD
Houston PADRECC Director*



Dr. Eugene Lai, PADRECC Director, pauses to talk with Dr. Karon Cook, PADRECC Associate Director of Research.

Houston PADRECC Completes Recruitment for DBS Study

The Houston PADRECC recently completed recruitment for the VA Cooperative Study entitled, "A Comparison of Best Medical Therapy and Deep Brain Stimulation of Subthalamic Nucleus and Globus Pallidus for the Treatment of Parkinson's Disease." Houston was one of 6 PADRECC sites to participate in this VA multi-medical center project.

The study focuses on a neurosurgical procedure implanting electrodes into a patient's brain and a battery pack into the side of the person's chest wall below the collarbone or in the patient's ab-

domen. This battery pack delivers electrical signals through a connector or lead wire to the brain cells.

MEDVAMC researchers believe the electrical signals may relieve Parkinson's disease symptoms by blocking incorrect messages processed by the brain in areas that control movement. This procedure was offered to 26 veterans receiving health care at the Houston PADRECC who met certain medical criteria.

Eugene C. Lai, MD, PhD, Houston PADRECC Director and Richard K. Simpson, Jr., MD,

PhD, Houston PADRECC Associate Clinical Director, led the Houston study. Additional patients from Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and other VA medical centers in Texas were enrolled.

For more educational information about the Deep Brain Stimulation study, visit the PADRECC Web site at www.va.gov/padrecc_houston/ or contact Connie Ward at (713) 794-8410.

*Constance Ward, MSN, RN-BC
PADRECC Clinical Coordinator*



Constance Ward provides veteran Mr. Terry McCullar with discharge instructions following his DBS surgery at MEDVAMC.



January 05
PADRECC
Educational
Support Group
members L to
R: Mr. Smith,
Mr. Thomas,
Mr. and Mrs.
Dimmig, Mr.
and Mrs. Perret
and Mr. And
Mrs. Wells
(seated).

PADRECC Happenings

Linda Fincher, PADRECC Assistant Clinical Director, presented a research study on telehealth medication intervention for PD patients at the American Association of Neuroscience Nurses in April. In February, she presented a lecture on PD Care and Education to nursing graduate students at MEDVAMC. **Marilyn Trail** and **Naomi Nelson**, PADRECC Associate Directors of Education, are hosting their 11th graduate student in occupational therapy this semester. **Karon Cook**, PADRECC Associate Director of Research, presented a paper at the 2005 Annual Meeting of VA Health Services Research in Baltimore. **Dr. Eugene Lai**, **Dr. Aliya Sarwar**, **Dr. Gabriel Hou**, **Suzanne Moore**, **Michele York**, **Donna White**, **Marilyn Trail**, **Naomi Nelson**, **Constance Ward**, **Farah Atassi**, **Linda Fincher**, and **John Van** attended the 9th International Congress of PD and Movement Disorders in New Orleans. The **Houston PADRECC** was well-represented with 5 research posters. Mike Mollett of Cox Radio-Houston interviewed **Dr. Eugene Lai** on Deep Brain Stimulation Research for PD.

Meet Dr. Pamela New

Meet Pamela New, MD, a neurologist who spends two days a month managing the care of patients with PD at the MEDVAMC. Dr. New received her medical training at Northwestern University, Baylor College of Medicine (BCM), Cornell Medical Center, and MD Anderson Cancer Center.

She is an Associate Professor of Neurosurgery at BCM, specializing in the treatment of brain tumors and the neurological complications resulting from cancer and cancer treatment.

Dr. New came to Houston from the Audie Murphy VA Hospital and the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio where she directed the

Movement Disorders Clinic and the Neuro-Oncology program. She has 3 children, the oldest, a son, is in the army and stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Her two daughters attend school in San Antonio. It makes for a long commute home! We look forward to future collaborations with Dr. New.

Safety Tips for the Bathroom

- ? Use nightlight to light the way from bed to bathroom
- ? Improve access to light switches
- ? Remove decorative floor mats
- ? Hang mats on tub or shower... do not leave on floor
- ? Use a shower chair and hand held shower head
- ? Place frequently used items on lower shelves of medicine cabinet
- ? Place traction mats or decals in tub/shower
- ? Consider a raised toilet seat or rails around toilet
- ? Install tub grab rails/bars
- ? Keep floor dry
- ? Remove clutter
- ? Never use towel bars for support

Suggestions for Better Sleep

1. Establish a bedtime routine – a regular time to retire and to awaken.
2. Develop a bedtime ritual –a glass of warm milk, reading, favorite TV show.
3. Maintain comfort in the bedroom – temperature, noise, and light.
4. Delay bedtime if you're hungry, thirsty, and after drinking fluids.
5. Use safety measures – nightlight, phone, flashlight, smoke alarms, and locked doors.
6. Reduce fluids after 6 or 7 in the evening.
7. Exercise during the day but not at night.
8. Take naps early in the afternoon and for short periods of time.
9. Reduce caffeine intake after noon.
10. Practice mental games such as counting sheep.
11. Try relaxation exercises on tapes and CD's.
12. Consult an MD for sleep apnea, nightmares, and physical agitation during sleep.
13. Worrying about NOT SLEEPING makes it worse.
14. Do your pets help you sleep or are they a distraction?



Left:
Epidemiologist Donna White,
PhD, is a PADRECC researcher.

Visit our website at
[www.va.gov/
PADRECC_Houston](http://www.va.gov/PADRECC_Houston)

Research...In a Minute

Exercise and PD

In a study of more than 125,000 men and women, researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health report that men who engaged in regular, strenuous activity when young were 60% less likely to develop PD than men who were sedentary. Men who were the most active at the beginning of the 14-year study cut their risk by 50%.

Coffee, Gender, and PD

The risk of PD seems to be reduced in men who consume caffeine but not among women who take estrogen. Estrogen may compete with how the body uses caffeine, but the results are un-

certain. Caffeine may protect against PD. However, further study is needed to determine how caffeine interacts with estrogen usage in women.

Apokyn Used for PD

A new PD drug, Apokyn (apomorphine) has been approved for the rapid treatment of slow mobility (freezing) in patients with *advanced* PD. Apomorphine is not for everyone. It needs to be injected, it must be taken with a nausea medication, and low blood pressure may occur.

Aging in America

A recent national publication listed these findings:

1. States are expected to experience a dramatic shortfall in

longterm care workers.

2. Excluding home equity, seniors' median annual income totals only \$23,369.
3. State health and aging officials now consider chronic disease prevention and control a higher priority than access to health care or prescription drugs.
4. 50% of seniors live with at least 2 chronic illnesses and 80% experience at least 1.

Naomi Nelson, PhD, RN

PADRECC

Co-Associate Director of Education

PADRECC and Houston Area Parkinson Society Present:

A Wellness Fair for Individuals with Parkinson's Disease and their Families

**Saturday
April 30, 2005
9AM to 1PM**

**American Red Cross Building
2700 Southwest Freeway
Houston**

Co-Sponsored by:

**Society for Progressive Supranuclear Palsy, Houston
TWU School of Physical Therapy, Houston
UTMB Department of Physical Therapy, Galveston**

**For more information contact Naomi Nelson
713-794-8938 or
Kathleen Crist at HAPS, 713-626-7114**

Dr. Hou Returns to PADRECC

PADRECC welcomes back Gabriel Hou, MD, PhD, former PADRECC fellow, as a PADRECC staff neurologist. Dr. Hou graduated from medical school at China Medical College in 1990, completed graduate school at Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, NYC, residency in neurology at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, NYC, and fellowship in movement disorders at Baylor College of Medicine. He now returns to us after serving as an attending physician in neurology at Chi-Mei Medical Center (2002-2004), Tainan, Taiwan.

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